

## REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8-16, and 20-26 are pending, with claims 1, 9, and 23 being in independent form. By the present amendment, claims 1-6, 8-16, and 20-26 have been amended and claims 7 and 17-19 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

At the outset, the Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter.

In the Office Action, claim 23 stands rejected for indefiniteness. The Applicants have amended the claim to address the Office's concern. In particular, the objected-to phrase "together with the second one of the nodes" has been deleted, as the recitation merely reiterates that the second one of the nodes is a member of the second group of the nodes. It will be understood that the scope of the claim has not been narrowed or even changed by this amendment, and as such persons interpreting the claim should not limit it only to its literal scope. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the Office reconsider and withdraw the indefiniteness rejection.

In addition, the Office objects to FIGS. 1-5, stating that the figures should be labeled with a "Prior Art" legend. The Applicants are submitting with this paper replacement sheets (5), the entry of which would result in the legend being added to each of the figures. Accordingly, the Applicants also request that the objection to the drawings be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The Office also objects to the form of the Abstract. The Applicants have amended the Abstract to address the Office's concerns, and respectfully request that the objection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Turning to the art rejections, claims 1-6, 9, and 12-16 have been rejected for anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 6,691,173 to Morris et al. ("Morris"). Claims 10, 11, and 20-22 have been rejected for obviousness over Morris in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,768,531 to Lin. The Applicants believe this Amendment overcomes the stated art rejections for the following reasons.

Claim 7 is indicated as allowable in the Action if rewritten in independent form. The Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include all of the features of claim 7, and have canceled claim 7. Claims 2-6 depend from claim 1, and claim 8

has been amended to depend from claim 1 as well. Accordingly, claims 1-6 and 8 should be in condition to be allowed.

Claims 17-19 are also indicated as allowable in the Action if rewritten in independent form. The Applicants have amended independent claim 9 to include, alternatively, each of the features of claims 17-19. Claims 17-19 have been canceled. Claims 10-16 and 20-22 depend from claim 9. Accordingly, claims 9-16 and 20-22 should be in condition to be allowed as well.

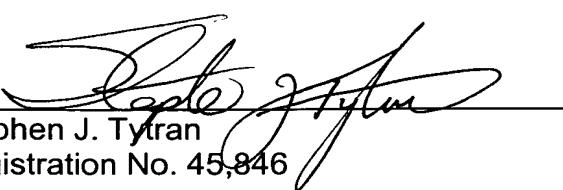
Claims 23-26 are indicated as allowable in the Action if rewritten in independent form. The Applicants have amended claim 23 to read in independent form, including all of the features of its prior base claim, claim 9. Claims 24-26 depend from claim 23. Accordingly, claims 23-26 are also in condition to be allowed.

The remaining claims have been amended merely to better conform the claims to U.S. practice. Accordingly, the scopes of these claims have not been narrowed or even changed by these amendments.

For the foregoing reasons, it is believed this application is in condition for allowance and an early Notice thereof is earnestly solicited. If any questions remain, the Examiner is invited to phone the undersigned at the below-listed number.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By:   
Stephen J. Tyran  
Registration No. 45,846

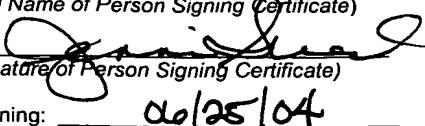
P.O. Box 1404  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404  
(919) 941-9240

Date: June 25, 2004

Attachments: Drawing Replacement Sheets (5)

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on June 25, 2004

Jennie Snead  
(Typed Name of Person Signing Certificate)

  
(Signature of Person Signing Certificate)

Date of Signing: 06/25/04